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Urban District Council of Ulverston.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

Year ending December 31st, 1943.

ULVERSTON :
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To the Chairman and Members of the Urban
District Council of Ulverston.

: Annual Report of the :
Medical Officer of Health.

ULVERSTON,
SEPTEMBER, 1944.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1943 on the Sanitary circumstances, administration and vital statistics of your district. It is shorter than would have been the case in peace-time, to comply with the instructions of the Ministry of Health that annual reports should be curtailed so far as practicable during the period of the war.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area of District (acres)	3,196
Number of Inhabited Houses	2,815
Rateable Value	£55,801
Amount produced by Penny Rate	£221

VITAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.

There were 137 births, 74 male and 63 female, giving a birth rate of 14.1 per 1,000. Seven of the total 137 births were of illegitimate children. There were, in addition, 6 still-births, giving a still-birth rate of 43.8 per 1,000 registered live births.

DEATHS.

One hundred and thirty-five deaths of residents were registered during the year, giving a death-rate of 13.9 per 1,000.

The age periods at which the deaths occurred are given in the table below :—

Under 1	1-	5-	10-	15-	20-	30-	40-	50-	60-	70-	80-	90-
8	1	2	....	1	2	7	3	12	28	43	24	4

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

There were 8 deaths of infants under one year of age, giving an infantile death rate of 58.4 per 1,000 births. Six of these deaths took place in what is known as the " neo-natal period," that is to say in the first month of life. There has been comparatively little decline in the death rate during the first month of life, a fact which suggests that the causes of mortality in that period are different from those in the later months, and also that they are less amenable to those influences which have led to so marked a reduction in the infantile death rate as a whole. Four of the 6 neo-natal deaths were due to prematurity, one to marasmus and one to gastro-enteritis. The remaining two deaths of infants were due to broncho-pneumonia, the disease in one instance being a complication of whooping-cough.

MATERNAL MORTALITY.

There were two maternal deaths, both " associated with pregnancy," one was ascribed to chronic myocarditis and the other to high blood pressure and cerebral haemorrhage.

The other causes of death were :—

DISEASES OF HEART AND BLOOD VESSELS. 65, namely, heart disease 45 ; coronary thrombosis 3 ; cerebral haemorrhage and thrombosis 14 ; and arteriosclerosis 3.

CANCER.

There were 21 deaths from this disease, particulars of which appear in the table below :—

Age periods at which death occurred.

	50-60		60-70		70-80		80-86		Total.
Organs affected.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Stomach and Oesophagus	1	1	1	....	2	....	....	....	5
Pancreas	....	1	....	....	....	....	....	....	1
Rectum	....	1	....	....	1	2	....	....	4
Lung, Larynx or Tonsil	....	1	3	....	....	1	2	....	7
Female Generative Organs	....	2	....	2	....	....	....	....	4
	1	6	4	2	3	3	2	....	21

Cancer was the cause of 15.5 per cent. of all the deaths which occurred in Ulverston during the year 1943. The percentage for England and Wales in 1939 was 13.8.

DISEASES OF RESPIRATORY SYSTEM.—16, namely, bronchitis 3 ; pneumonia 2 ; pulmonary tuberculosis 5, influenza 6.

OTHER CAUSES OF DEATH were : nephritis 5 ; diabetes 2 ; senile decay 5 ; anterio poliomyelitis 1 ; all other causes 10.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

INCIDENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE DURING THE FIVE YEARS 1938-1942 COMPARED WITH THAT FOR 1943.

						1943.		
DISEASE.	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	No. of cases	Removed to Hospital	Died in Hospital
Scarlet Fever	12	17	4	9	22	12	11	....
Diphtheria	18	43	12	9	24	4	4	....
Typhoid & Para-Typhoid Fevers	6	....	....	7	2	....	....	....
Measles	....	....	16	....	26	54	....	....
Whooping Cough	....	....	49	2	....	15	....	....
Pneumonia	7	1	....	....	3	5	5	....
Encephalitis Lethargica	....	....	1	1	....	....	....	....
Poliomyelitis	....	....	1	....	....	....	....	....
Puerperal Pyrexia and Fever	....	1	....	1	....	....	....	....
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	....	....	....	....	2	....	....
Erysipelas	2	1	....	1	1	....	....	....
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	....	....	....	5	2	....	....	....
Total	46	63	83	35	80	92	20	Nil.

The position in respect of infectious diseases during the year under review was, upon the whole, satisfactory. The number of cases of measles was relatively large. Outbreaks of this disease occur from time to time, and, unfortunately, nothing can be done to avert them. As the infection is generally spread during the early catarrhal stage of the illness before the rash appears, and before a diagnosis has been made, prevention of the malady is rendered almost impossible by the usual methods of control. School closure is of little avail as a preventive measure on account of the many opportunities of acquiring infection outside of the school.

It is a mistake to assume, as many parents do, that measles is a trivial complaint. Measles is the most fatal of all diseases in children under 5 years of age. About 50 per cent. of the deaths occur in children under 2 years of age, and about 80 per cent. under 5 years of age. It is very important, therefore, that everything possible should be done to protect children under 5 years of age from measles infection. The longer the attack is postponed, the more hopeful the outlook for the child. Mortality in measles is due, not so much to the disease itself, but to complications, such as broncho-pneumonia, bronchitis, otitis media, etc. A doctor should always be called as soon as measles is suspected. The patient should be isolated and kept warm in bed. Careful home-nursing, throughout the illness is essential.

The number of cases of diphtheria was small—smaller even than the figures indicate. In only two of the patients admitted to hospital were diphtheria bacilli recovered from throat swabs. One of these was a child of four and the other a girl of 14. Neither of them had been immunised against diphtheria.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

During 1943 a total of 648 children completed the full course of immunisation, namely 160 under 5 years, and 488 between the ages of 5 and 15 years. At the end of the year it was estimated that 42.2 per cent. of the child population under 5 years of age and 75.2 of those between the ages of 5 and 15 years had been protected against attack of diphtheria by means of immunisation.

We are indebted to Mr. Womersley, to the Head Teachers and Staffs of the Ulverston Schools, and to the School Nurses of the County Council, for their valuable assistance in achieving the results to which reference is made above.

SCABIES.

A considerable number of persons suffering from scabies was treated during the year; some at the gas-cleansing station, and others, as out-patients, at the High Carley Isolation Hospital.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The laboratory work of the district is now carried out at the Ministry of Health Emergency Pathological Service Laboratory, which has been established at the High Carley Sanatorium. The Council are fortunate in being able to avail themselves of a first class service provided by a laboratory within easy reach. This not only enables specimens to reach the laboratory in a condition to ensure satisfactory investigation and reliable results, but facilitates consultation between the clinician and the laboratory expert, which is often advantageous. In the skilled Pathologist to the Laboratory, Dr. Brundret, medical men practising in the area have a very helpful colleague with whom they may confer in all cases of doubt or difficulty.

As your temporary Medical Officer of Health, I should like to express my appreciation of the valuable assistance which your Public Health Department has invariably received from Dr. Brundret.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1943.

	New Cases.				Deaths.			
Age Periods.	Respiratory.		Non Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
Years.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	....	....	1	....	....	....	....	....
1	....	....	1	....	....	....	....	....
5	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
10	....	1	....	1	....	....	....	....
15	....	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
20	1	3	....	....	....	2	....	....
25	3	....	....	1	....	1	....	....
35	....	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
45	....	1	....	....	1	....	....	....
55	1	....	....	....	1	....	....	....
65 and upwards	....	1	....	....	....	....	....	....
Totals	5	8	2	2	2	3	0	0
	13		4		5		0	
	17				5			

RAINFALL.

I am very much indebted to Councillor C. J. Chapman for placing at my disposal his carefully compiled statistics of the local rainfall obtained, over a long period of years, from readings of rain gauges in the grounds of his residence, Pengwerne, at Kilner Park, Ulverston.

Annual Rainfall, 1924-1943.

1924—55.79 1929—52.47 1934—51.05 1939—44.60
1925—50.34 1930—52.50 1935—54.34 1940—47.65
1926—53.59 1931—55.69 1936—48.33 1941—38.38
1927—56.52 1932—54.79 1937—42.75 1942—49.05
1928—71.82 1933—40.11 1938—56.03 1943—59.09

The annual average for the 20 years was 51·74; the monthly and quarterly averages are compared with those for 1943 below.

Months.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
20 year average—	5.39	3.54	2.94	2.78	3.29	3.18	4.55	4.98	4.77	6.09	5.49	4.74
1943—	8.08	3.00	1.58	3.07	5.16	3.51	4.70	10.00	7.09	5.75	4.59	2.56

Quarters.

20 year average	11.87	9.25	14.30	16.31
1943	12.66	11.74	21.79	12.90

The influence of meteorological conditions upon the health of the individual and of the community was first studied by Hippocrates, the celebrated Greek physician of antiquity who, born about 460 B.C., raised the medical school on the island of Cos in the Aegean Sea to a very high reputation. It is open to question whether, in recent times, the subject has received the attention it appears to deserve. But, however that may be, if meteorological data were included in the annual report of medical officers of health, opportunity would be afforded of observing, over a period of years, any relationship that might exist between meteorological conditions on the one hand and the general standard of health and incidence of disease on the other.

WATER SUPPLY.

The circular of the Ministry of Health on Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Health for the year 1943 requires such reports to contain a statement as to the sufficiency and quality of the water supply of the area and of its several parts, etc,

Ulverston was first provided with a piped water supply by a private company under powers granted by the Ulverston Water Act, 1852. The supply was derived from Pennington Beck in the Township of Pennington, and the original works appear to have included a small reservoir at, or near, Pennington Mill Dam.

The Barrow Corporation Act, 1873, authorised the Town Council to construct a reservoir at Pennington to impound water from the Pennington Beck, subject to the Ulverston Water Company being empowered to draw water from the reservoir on specified conditions.

With the exception of certain portions of the Company's works, which were transferred to the Corporation of Barrow, the water undertaking of the Ulverston Water Company was transferred to the Ulverston Local Board (the predecessor of the Urban District Council) by the Ulverston Local Board Act, 1874. The Barrow Corporation Act, 1875, authorised the construction and alteration of the Harlock and Poaka Beck reservoirs, together with a pipe to convey water from the Pennington Reservoir to the existing water works of the Local Board. The Act also required the Barrow Corporation to supply and deliver to the Local Board at their existing water works, or at such other works as may be substituted therefor, (a) any quantity of water required by the Local Board, not exceeding 400,000 gallons per day free of charge, and, (b) any further quantity required, not exceeding 200,000 gallons per day, on payment to the Barrow Corporation at the rate of 3d. per 1,000 gallons. This supply to be in priority to that given to any other user of the water, and to be derived from any of the Corporation reservoirs, e.g. Pennington, Poaka Beck or Harlock.

Water is now supplied by the Barrow Corporation to the Ulverston Urban District Council at the latter's water works, situated at Castle Hill, Pennington. At these works the water is subjected to sand filtration before passing into a service reservoir, which has a capacity of some two and a half million gallons. To meet war-time requirements of the Ministry of Health, a chlorinating plant was installed in May, 1942. It is a Wallace Tiernan apparatus, water from the service reservoir being chlorinated before passing into the trunk main. The Chloramime process is adopted. The application of chlorine is under automatic control, any variation in the flow of water causes automatic variation in the rate of chlorine delivery. The apparatus is fitted with a chlorine flow recorder. Tests for residual chlorine are made periodically—the results are stated to have been invariably satisfactory.

A sample of the water taken from the kitchen tap at Virginia House, Ulverston, on the 15th November, 1943, and subjected to bacteriological investigation at the Ministry of Health Emergency Pathological Service Laboratory, High Carley Sanatorium, gave the following result :—

Probable number of coliform organisms per 100 c.c.	0
Plate Count after 2 days at 37°C.	0
Plate Count after 3 days at 22°C.	0

Remarks :—

" Very satisfactory sample of chlorinated water."

(Signed) J. CARR BRUNDRET,
Pathologist.

Date 18th November, 1943.

MEAT INSPECTION.

Home-killed meat supplied to butchers in the Rural District of Ulverston and in the Urban Districts of Ulverston and Grange, is derived from animals slaughtered in a central slaughterhouse established by the Ministry of Food for the purpose in the Gill. The slaughterhouse is under the direct control of officers of the Ministry of Food, but the inspection of meat is, by arrangement with that Department, carried out by a rota of Inspectors, comprising your own Inspector, Mr. Smith, and two Sanitary Inspectors of the Ulverston Rural District, under the supervision of the Medical Officer of Health.

Notwithstanding the efforts which have been made to effect improvement, the structure and fittings of the Slaughterhouse and the conditions in which the inspection of meat has to be carried on still leave a great deal to be desired. It must, of course, be recognised that the arrangements are in the nature of a temporary expedient, hurriedly devised to meet the exigencies of the war, but there are improvements, both in organisation and equipment, which can and should be made and, with the support which I gratefully acknowledge to have invariably received from the Council, I propose to continue to press for such improvements as it may be found possible to effect in war time.

The approximate number of animals slaughtered and examined during the year under review was : cattle 1,763 ; sheep 15,077 ; calves 989 ; and pigs 62.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.

There are 20 cowkeepers in the district engaged in the production of milk for sale, 13 of whom are producer-retailers. Two of the latter produce Accredited Milk. The only pasteurising plant in the Ulverston Combined Sanitary District is that at Lindal operated by the Barrow-in-Furness and District Dairy Farmer's (Co-operative) Society Ltd. Pasteurised milk from this source is supplied mainly to schools in the Ulverston Urban District.

The dairy-farms are visited regularly by the Council's Inspector, Mr. Smith, who does everything possible to promote the production of clean milk.

While at some of the farms conditions are satisfactory, or reasonably satisfactory, at many they leave a great deal to be desired. Many of the shippons are old stone-built structures, often with lofts above. Some are defective in air-space ; some in height ; some in lighting and ventilation, and some in internal arrangement. Defects in floors and drainage arrangements are not infrequently found ; while the practice sometimes met with of keeping manure in too close proximity to the doors of the shippons, though it may perhaps lessen the labour connected with the removal of dung from the cowsheds, is contrary to the most elementary principles of hygiene.

In some instances there is not a separate dairy in which milk can be cooled and stored. In such circumstances the farm-house scullery is not infrequently used for the purpose, in contravention of the requirements of the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926. It is, of course, not easy to remedy such defects in war-time owing to scarcity of labour and materials, but it should be emphasised that, in the event of any person living in the farm-house contracting one or other of the numerous diseases, the infection of which may be conveyed by milk, the keeping of milk in a farm-house scullery, or wash-house is a procedure fraught with danger to the health of those who consume the milk.

In the circumstances which obtain at some of the farms, it is not easy to attain, and maintain, a high standard of cleanliness in the production of milk. The position is aggravated by the black-out regulations; by the difficulty of obtaining labour, and by the greater acreage which has to be brought under the plough as a war-time necessity. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, an effort is being made by the majority of cowkeepers to produce milk of as high a standard as circumstances permit.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

In addition to the ambulance maintained by the Ulverston Joint Hospital Board for the conveyance to the High Carley Isolation Hospital of patients suffering from infectious disease, a motor ambulance for accidents and non-infectious illnesses is provided by the Ulverston Joint Ambulance Committee to serve the Urban and Rural Districts of Ulverston. There are reciprocal arrangements for help in case of need, with Dalton and Grange, in each of which a motor ambulance is maintained.

HOUSING.

In common with most other areas throughout the country, there is now an acute shortage of houses in Ulverston. I have been distressed by the number of persons who have been unable to obtain adequate accommodation for their wives and families, and who have had, in consequence, to continue living often under the most unsuitable conditions.

In addition to shortage of houses, there are a number of very insanitary slum areas in the town which ought to be abolished at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Council are, of course, fully alive to the position, and a housing scheme is in course of preparation, which will enable building operations to be commenced as soon after the cessation of hostilities as circumstances permit. Judging from the schemes already carried out by the Council there is every reason to believe that the new scheme will be no less successful.

In the lay out of the housing estate, I hope it may be found practicable to combine utility with features pleasing to the eye. Surely the people of England are deserving of a better fate than that of being condemned to live amidst the blatant ugliness characterising far too many Council housing schemes, which have arisen, like mushroom growths, all over the country, and disfigure the face of this fair land.

In every housing estate there should, in my opinion, be adequate facilities to enable children to play in the open air, at not too great a distance from their homes, without the necessity of having recourse to the pavements or roadways for the purpose. To see small children exposed to all the dust and dirt of the town or city pavement, or incurring grave risk of injury, or death, through motor accidents on the roadways, when they are as yet too young to realise the risks they run, is a sad and disconcerting sight which reflects little credit upon our modern civilisation. Surely it does not surpass the wit of man to devise ways and means whereby the lot of future generations of children may be rendered happier in this respect. Even if it should add a little to the cost of housing, could money be spent to greater advantage ?

In the older houses in Ulverston there are no baths or wash-hand basins, and in many not even a hot-water supply. Notwithstanding these disabilities, the general standard of personal cleanliness is high, which reflects great credit upon the Ulverston people. Having regard to the lack of ablution facilities in the houses of so many of the people, the provision by the Council of public baths, including a swimming bath would appear to be overdue.

The report of your Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector, Mr. C. Telford Hague, is appended.

In conclusion, I should like to express my thanks to the Council for their much appreciated kindness and support.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HUGH A. MACEWEN,

Annual Report of the
: Sanitary Inspector. :

Town Hall,
Ulverston,
March, 1944.

To the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee.

Gentlemen,

I beg to present herewith a brief summary of the work. carried out during the period January 1st to December 31st, 1943, relating to Public Health Administration.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS, ETC.

28 cases have been dealt with officially by letter, and numerous other cases have been dealt with by direct contact.

NEW HOUSING AND SLUM CLEARANCE, ETC.

No action has been possible under this heading, but a site has been chosen and provisionally approved by the appropriate Ministries for Post War Housing. A survey is being made, levels taken, and tentative layout plans prepared of the Council's proposals for submission to the Government Departments concerned, in order that a start may be made as soon as practicable after hostilities cease.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The system received constant inspection and attention, and has been maintained in an efficient state.

SHOPS ACT AND FACTORIES ACT.

Cases under this heading have been dealt with satisfactorily as they have arisen.

REFUSE REMOVAL AND SALVAGE COLLECTION.

Refuse removal has continued to receive the attention due to this necessary branch of sanitary administration, and due to the care taken in the disposal of the refuse by controlled tipping, no complaints of rat infestation or from other causes have been received. Salvage to the value of £786 15s. 11d. was recovered, sorted and sold during the year, the weights of materials salvaged being as follows :—

	T.	C.	Q.
Paper	97	18	3
Metal	50	14	0
Textiles	3	14	3
Bones	2	0	0
Kitchen Waste	29	17	1

RATS.

The procedure of issuing rat poison to ratepayers, and baiting all Council property and sewers regularly and systematically, has been continued, and in addition a number of private premises have been dealt with.

A meeting was held in the Town Hall, Barrow-in-Furness, in December, attended by officials from Barrow Corporation, Ulverston Rural, Dalton and Ulverston Urban Councils, to meet representatives of the Infestation Branch of the Ministry of Food, regarding the suggested appointment of a Rodent Officer for the combined districts. After discussions on various aspects of the proposal, a recommendation was passed that the Ulverston Rural and Dalton and Ulverston Urban Councils have a further meeting, with a view to a joint appointment, and we now await the calling of this meeting by the Ministry of Food.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Number of Scarlet Fever notifications received	12
,, Diphtheria ,, ,, ...	4

The premises of the patients, and other premises in which illness had occurred were fumigated

WATER SUPPLY

The supply has been maintained without interruption.

The Medical Officer of Health will deal with the purity of the water in his report. However, I can say that from tests he has carried out, he informs me that it is entirely satisfactory.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

C TELFORD HAGUE,

Sanitary Inspector.